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The Mission
OF THE
Cincinnati.

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ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

NEW YORK STATE

Society of the Cincinnati,

AT THE CELEBRATION OF THE 142d ANNIVERSARY
OF THE BIRTHDAY OF WASHINGTON,

BY

Rev. MARINUS WILLETT,
"

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 23,

1874.

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NEW YORK STATE
SOCIETY OF THE CINCINNATI,

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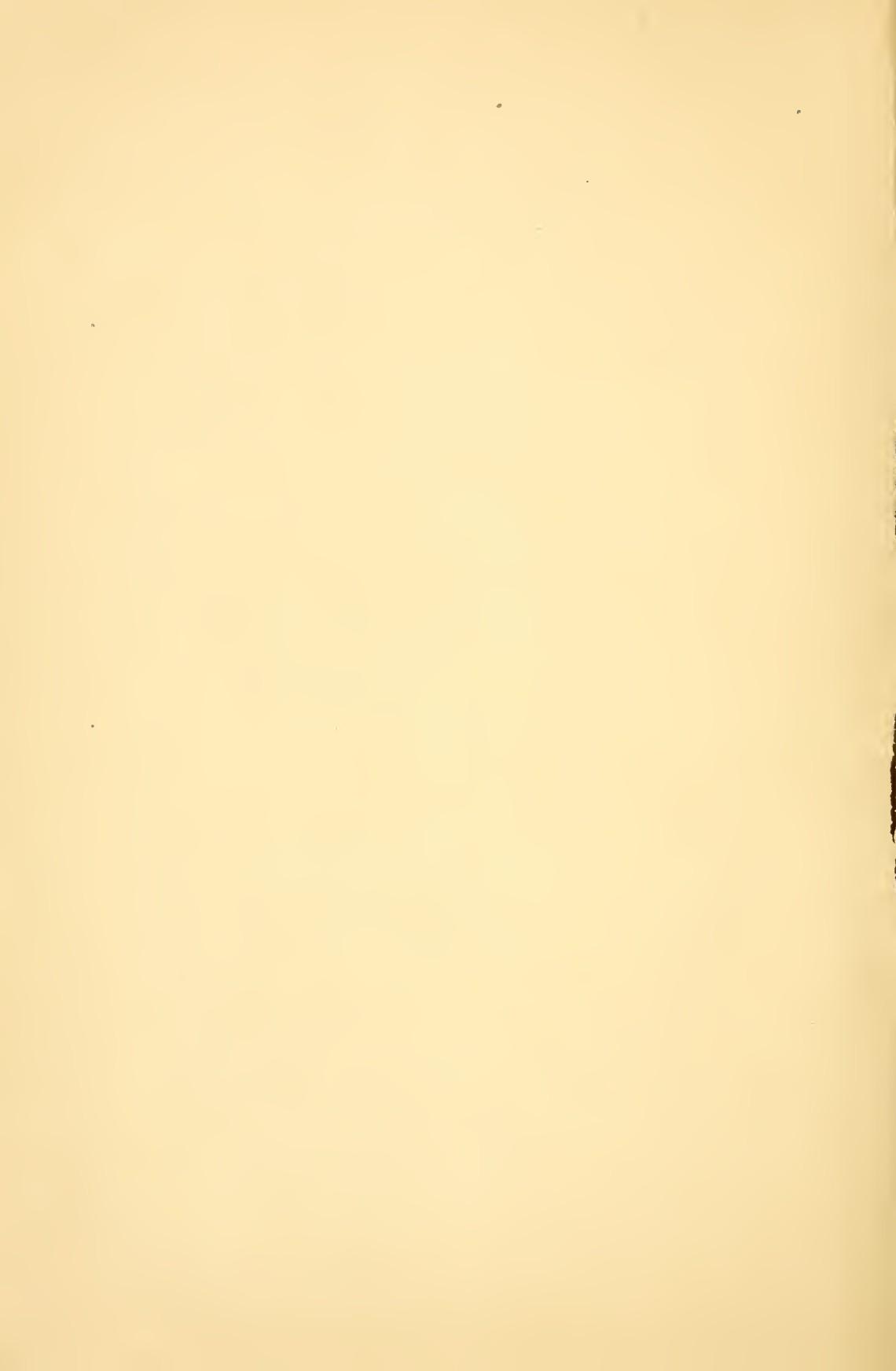
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VICE-PRESIDENT, WILLIAM S. POPHAM.
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PHYSICIAN, ALEXANDER CLINTON, M. D.

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WILLIAM STUART,	ALEXANDER HAMILTON, JR.
WICKHAM HOFFMAN,	THOMAS W. CHRYSTIE,
WILLIAM H. CROSBY,	JOHN SCHUYLER.

DELEGATES TO THE GENERAL SOCIETY.

HON. HAMILTON FISH, LL.D.	REV. MARINUS WILLETT,
WILLIAM S. POPHAM,	JOHN W. GREATON.



Extract from the Minutes of a Meeting of the Standing Committee of the New York State Society of the Cincinnati, held at the New York Society Library, November 22d, 1873.

On a motion of the Rev. Dr. HUTTON Messrs. JOHN W. GREATON, WILLIAM H. CROSBY and JOHN SCHUYLER were appointed a Committee to make arrangements for the celebration of the one hundred and forty-second anniversary of the birthday of Washington.

In pursuance of their appointment, the Committee invited the Rev. MARINUS WILLETT to deliver an address on that occasion.

Extracts from the Minutes of a meeting of the New York State Society of the Cincinnati, held at Delmonico's on Monday evening, February 23d, 1874.

On motion of Mr. WILLIAM H. CROSBY it was unanimously

Resolved, That the thanks of this Society be tendered to Rev. Mr. WILLETT for his interesting and instructive address delivered this evening, and that the Committee of Arrangements be directed to have the same printed and copies thereof distributed to the members.

ADDRESS.

Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Cincinnati:

We are assembled to celebrate the Birthday of the great Leader of the American armies in the struggle which terminated in our National Independence.

It seems appropriate to this occasion to call to remembrance the grandeur of the Principles then, for the first time in the history of the world, incorporated into the Government of a People.

I propose, therefore, as the subject of this Address, briefly to vindicate the Institution of this Society, to consider its Intention and examine its Principles, and to inquire what these Principles demand of us in the present condition of affairs ; or,

The *Mission of the Society*, its relations and obligations to the country in our generation.

It is well known that this Society has seen its dark days ; that men of radical and extreme

opinions professed to see in it an attempt to establish an Order of Nobility, and looked upon it as a foe to Republican Institutions, though its founders were men who had pledged everything to the overthrow of monarchy, and the establishment of the Republic.

We find, upon our own records, opposition to the basis of *Primogeniture* as the condition of membership, in that it accorded to "birth," what was due only to "merit," whereas meritorious service to the State, or indeed any particular merit, could hardly be a possible standard of admission at the early age of twenty-one years; besides which the Society has full power to judge of the worthiness of those who may be proposed as members.

It has even been asserted in the public prints that Washington himself was opposed to the Society, notwithstanding the falsity of such an assertion had been fully exposed by our honored President from the records of the General Society, and notwithstanding the fact that the Commander-in-Chief of the American armies was its President-General until the day of his death, and the additional fact, that the diplomas of the original members of the Cincinnati bear his signature as President.

But, notwithstanding the opposition which it encountered, and the struggles through which it has passed, it has received the full endorsement and hearty sympathy of some of the noblest and most patriotic citizens of our country, and is cherished to day in the hearts of its members, in the different States of our Union, with an enthusiasm and devotion, which bid fair to increase rather than diminish with time.

This fact alone is an assurance that this Society embodies Principles, which have their source in the highest and holiest emotions of our nature.

Its Purpose may be briefly stated: "It was founded by the Officers of the American Army at the period of its dissolution" (a fact of itself sufficient to command the respect of the world), "to commemorate that great event which gave Independence to North America."

An Institution of Remembrance is one of the oldest and most sacred ideas of human history.

Every seventh day we commemorate the creation of the world, and acknowledge God as its Founder, at the express command of the Creator Himself.

Among the Jews, days commemorative of grand events in their history were numerous and of

sacred obligation and observance, and in the last and perfected establishment of the Kingdom of God among men, to keep in mind the fundamental principle of that Kingdom, God's great love to man in the life and death of His Son, this necessity of our human nature is recognized, by the establishment of a simple but sublime ordinance, by which His life of humiliation and self-sacrifice, and His death of anguish and shame, might be kept in remembrance for all time, with the injunction, "Do this, as oft as ye do it, in Remembrance of Me."

It is then in obedience to a principle of human nature, recognized by the very highest authority as necessary and indispensable, and rendered sacred by antiquity as well as by Divine ordaining, that our Fathers established this Society "to endure as long as they shall endure, or any of their eldest male posterity, and in failure thereof, the collateral branches, to commemorate that great event which gave Independence to North America."

No Society can have strength and stability, can call forth enthusiasm and devotion, unless it is founded on Principles which appeal to the profoundest emotions of the human soul, and,

surely, in this respect the wisdom of its Founders is vindicated.

What a record of savage cruelty, of endurance under extreme sufferings, of unconquerable heroism, of self-sacrifice and supreme devotion to the noblest and highest interests of humanity is that, which we are thus enjoined to commemorate!

The discovery of this continent was a wonderful event in the history of the earth, and was fitly consecrated by acts of Divine worship as the feet of Columbus and his companions touched the shores of this Western world. It was the revelation—to what had up to that time constituted the known world—of that grand theatre on which, as appears to us, the development of the race is to be completed, and the final acts of this world's history are to be performed. But the work of Columbus, grand as it was, was but the rolling up of the curtain—the finger post, directing those floods of emigration which have been rolling on from that day to this—the marshalling of the forces of the future. *The great event*, that which gave shape and form, direction and an inspiring power to this grand accumulation of forces, was that which gave Independence to North America.

It has always seemed to me, whether consciously or unconsciously to themselves, that those words our fathers selected in the incorporation of this Society were *prophetic*—North America. It was their Principles, the cause for which they fought, which made them great. And the inspiration by which they incorporated into this Government the fundamental ideas of the Divine Government has, even in our day, caused those ideas to penetrate and pervade not only this continent, but has thrown into commotion and convulsion all the old kingdoms and nationalities of the continent of Europe. God's greatest, most precious gifts to men have been those purchased with the blood and anguish of the innocent and the good. So it was with the Gospel and its blessings of Eternal Life; what an army of prophets and martyrs of all ages yielded up their lives that those gifts might be a sacred inheritance to men, until at last He came who should be the supremest example of this Fact; so also, it was this very Principle in the foundation of our Government, which justified our fathers in styling it the *Great* event. The Principles for which they contended were Divine, and, like the Divine Founder, they laid down their lives to

secure them as a birthright and inheritance for all men.

Its intention was also "to inculcate the duty of laying down, in peace, arms assumed for public defense."

It is natural to suppose this had reference to the well-known letter, circulated among the officers, counselling them not to lay down their arms until Congress had complied with their demands. The duty indicated was therefore plain—self-control, and the sacrifice of personal interest to the welfare of the country, even though that sacrifice might involve, as it did, the necessary provision for their families. They were to rely upon the honor and patriotism of their fellow-citizens to supply these rewards of faithful service, and not on a usurpation of the authority and power, with which they had been clothed. It is a sad reflection that those claims have never been honored by the nation.

Whether this Principle of our Society—the sacred duty of recognizing the welfare of their country as superior to any private interests—has been religiously observed, might admit of a question, when we consider the apathy so widespread to her interests. I remember seeing one of those

old Patriots shed tears as he spoke of his country—it is a rare sight to-day. And yet, it was not the least gratifying result of the late civil war, that the love of our native land came forth pure and bright out of that fierce struggle, and promises to strike, broader and deeper than ever before, its roots in all parts of that land.

Doubtless, this sacrifice of private interests to the public good, was one main idea of those who instituted this Society.

They fully appreciated the grandeur of character of that noble old Roman, who was found following the plough, when the statesmen of his country sought him, as the only one capable of leading their armies to victory, and clothed him with absolute power, and who, having achieved the salvation of his country, laid aside that power and gladly returned to his plough and the obscurity of domestic life, thus proving conclusively that no personal ambition, but solely the love of his country, was his ruling motive.

The greatest need our nation has to-day is to have that example held up, in all its simplicity and grandeur, as the only motive of action in those who are clothed with authority and power

for the welfare of the People, and not for private, personal and selfish ends.

Noble and grand, indeed, is that man who can prove by his actions, as did the hero whose birth we celebrate to-day, that no selfish or personal motives are permitted to mingle with that pure and lofty devotion he owes to his country.

On such a foundation as this, they proposed "to unite in acts of brotherly affection and bonds of perpetual friendship the members constituting the same." A union perpetuating the "friendships formed amid the pressure of common dangers and hardships, cemented with blood and suffering," inspired by supreme devotion to the Principles represented in the Government, and expressing itself in all the acts and conduct of life.

Our Fathers, as well as the Principles personified in them, were the results of ages of human experience ; such men were only possible under certain conditions ; they had been fitted for their task by a long and severe training of Providence. Not only the peculiar surroundings amid which they were born and nurtured, but the Principles which had been instilled into their Fathers, handed down through generations which had preceded them, made them what they were.

While this is a brief summary of the objects of the Founders of our Society, they have been still more explicit in regard to the *Principles* on which it is based, and in enumerating these, it will be at once apparent, that we are by no means fulfilling the design of its Founders in occupying a merely nominal place, or holding merely formal meetings for routine business or social enjoyment.

They have put on record their purpose in the organization of this Society, and they have imposed on us, their successors, the obligation to accomplish that purpose ; and that obligation we have voluntarily assumed.

“The following Principles shall be immutable and form the basis of the Cincinnati : ‘*An incessant attention to preserve inviolate those exalted rights and liberties of human nature for which they have fought and bled, and without which the high rank of a Rational Being is a curse instead of a blessing.*’”

Here, then, we perceive that a living, active organization was intended, having as a duty and sacred obligation, devotion to the liberties they had purchased so dearly, and demanding from its members, in their fulfillment, incessant watchfulness and activity. We may learn, then, in

contemplating our *mission*, the means also by which we may be true to it.

It seems hardly necessary to direct attention to the fact, that such a union as is here intended has nothing whatever to do with peculiarities of personal opinion and judgment, but with those broad, underlying Principles of human history in which all are united.

How valuable is the history of human experience—the knowledge which men have acquired so painfully by the bitter experiences of life—generation after generation ascertaining what was false and pernicious in their systems of government only by the awful sufferings they entailed on them and their descendants! How valuable, and yet how lightly is it prized ; how sneeringly is it set aside by youthful folly, and how terrible is the penalty of suffering and wretchedness exacted of each succeeding generation for this willful neglect.

All that is valuable in the history of past ages are the results of human experience, though we need, indeed, an infallible standard of truth with which to compare and determine those results.

The peculiar feature of our Society is, that the men who established it were chosen by Divine

Providence to incorporate into a human government the grand total of the results of the experiences of all ages and generations of men who had preceded them, for the benefit of the whole human race.

It may not be inappropriate nor unprofitable, therefore, to examine as briefly as possible the Principles thus by them incorporated into a government, to take its place and exert its influence among the nations of the earth, and manifest, by its fruits, the truth and eternal stability of those Principles.

Ages of misery and degradation alone made possible the government which our fathers bequeathed to us. No wonder they were brave, noble, unselfish men, since they themselves were spiritually begotten of the extremest tests which have ever been applied to the human soul.

When we see with what exceeding difficulty, and against what almost insuperable obstacles other nations are struggling to attain the blessings achieved for us, we can comprehend to some extent the magnitude of the work we commemorate to day. I have said that this government, and the men who founded it, were the result of the ages of human experience of the nations which had pre-

ceded them, interpreted by the unerring standard of Divine Revelation—permit me to illustrate and substantiate this assertion.

The Egyptian, the Babylonish and Asiatic, the Greek and Roman civilizations had each developed its peculiar power and demonstrated the extent and nature of the results which they were capable of accomplishing ; we can measure their influence in elevating or degrading, conserving or corrupting the human race (and I think may trace what was elevating and purifying in them all to the influence, near or remote, powerful or faint, of the Divine Oracles of the Hebrew nation). But of their utter failure to effect a permanent moral purification and elevation of those nations, history speaks too clearly to be misunderstood.

It was when every possible experiment in human government had been exhausted, when despotism the most absolute had been succeeded by a limited monarchy, when the grand and stern virtues of the Republic which succeeded these had been corrupted by the wealth and luxury which those virtues had accumulated, and, as a necessary consequence, tyranny followed with most frightful excesses, until it became evident that the difficulty lay in human nature

itself, and patriotic men despaired of the future, then, in the utter hopelessness of all relief, the announcement was heralded to men, "The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand;" and He came who alone could shed light on the darkness and give hope to the despairing, and inaugurated a kingdom destined to become universal among men. From that time Christianity becomes a more potent element in human history than had been the case with the Hebrew faith.

The succeeding history of the continent of Europe, (for to this theatre, principally, was the struggle confined,) is the history of the conflict of those Christian Principles, thus implanted, with the old political, social, and religious errors embodied in government and in society.

After desperate struggles, we perceive gradually emerging from the smoke and agony and confusion of the battle, the grand Principles of Civil and Religious Liberty which, as succeeding history has proved, needed to be transplanted into an entirely new and virgin soil, free from the noxious weeds of ancient custom, and false principles of government, and ignorant ideas, and prejudices, which centuries of error had petrified into human customs and laws.

Such a country God had kept in reserve ; such a people he had been training for his purposes, and transplanted them, worn out with the rack of despotic power, and having every sentiment of their souls aroused in opposition to every form of tyranny, to every one of the old exploded errors of human government. The glory of our country is that it is founded on Principles inherent in human nature, and so imperishable ; that is to say, the Principles of the Divine Government, which alone are perfectly adapted to our human nature.

That idea of a human government which was founded on the Divine Right of Kings, and which remains in some force to this day, is a singular example of a historical error perpetuated through centuries, since the Scriptural account of the appointment of the first king of Israel unmistakably conveys the lesson that it was accorded to the willful determination of the people to be governed as were the heathens around them ; it was a concession to their low moral condition, and their request was granted in anger because they rejected God as their King ; and all the evils, the heavy burden of unnecessary expenses, the oppression of the People, the yoke of servi-

tude for themselves and their children which have been the results of the system from that day to this, were clearly and forcibly set before them by the Divine command.

Our Fathers, taught by the experience of centuries, and by correct views of Revelation, returned to the ancient Divinely authorized system of government, calling no man Master but *one*, and no man Father but one in Heaven.

Our honored Chaplain has proved in his address that, notwithstanding assertions to the contrary, we are a Christian nation, and that because a most unmistakable determination is clearly seen in our Constitution to afford not one inch of ground on which to build a spiritual despotism, it does not follow that the Government itself is not founded on the essential ideas of Christianity.

Those essential ideas are thus summed up by its Divine Founder: "Thou shalt love God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself." And this is what is meant by self-government—not as so many ignorant people seem to suppose, the right to do what each one pleases, but a government by the people of themselves, through their representatives, under the supreme authority of God.

Self-government, in the individual, implies the highest type of manhood, and, in a nation, it is *possible* only where the people composing it have attained to this high elevation, and can be *permanent* only where, as individuals and as a nation, they are controlled by "the Principles of Divine Revelation; for self-government means a willing allegiance to the immutable Principles of Right, Justice, and Truth; in other words, to the eternal perfections of God."

In this idea of self-government is plainly included the defense of the rights and interests of the weak, the obscure, and the helpless of the community, against the encroachments and the tyranny of wealth or political demagogues, of power of any sort aimed against the rights and liberties of the people.

Our Constitution not only confers but *ensures* and *defends* Equal Rights to all, and implies all that is necessary to effect that purpose. The history of our day convinces us of the importance of keeping in mind and enforcing this purpose of our Government, which is essential to its existence.

Nothing will draw down the Divine displeasure upon us, nothing sap the foundations of our insti-

tutions sooner, if we regard the lessons of history, than neglect or disregard of this vital Principle of the Divine Government ; and here, it seems to me, is one of our greatest dangers, the despotism of soulless corporations, the combination of corrupt officials, and of men in positions of influence, trampling under foot all rights in their mad thirst for wealth, corrupting the fountains of justice, and breaking down every safeguard of the rights of the weak and defenseless ; this is sapping the very foundations of our Republic, and introducing that worst of all despotisms, the rule of the unprincipled, the reckless, and the criminal ; and the only remedy is in the personal character of those who fill these offices of trust and responsibility.

Among those exalted rights and liberties of human nature, prominent and foremost is the right of freedom to worship God according to the dictates of one's own conscience.

Who can estimate the cost, in human agony and blood, of this inherent right of man ?

The gist of this matter, as understood by all who do *sincerely* and *honestly* hold to the liberty of conscience, is this : that man, as a responsible being, endowed by his Creator with faculties

capable of appreciating and understanding the Revelations of Himself and His will, made by God to His intelligent creatures, is amenable to God only, and that, therefore, no man has authority over the conscience; that such authority belongs only to God, and that *man* is utterly incapable, by reason of his finite powers, of exercising such control over his fellow-man.

This is one grand secret of the success of our institutions, and of the development which has taken place under them, and is inwrought into the whole structure of our Government.

Every human being is guaranteed this right by the whole power of the State, of course not to be extended to any one to the prejudice of others. If one demands privileges inconsistent with the rights of others, such privileges cannot be granted, since they conflict with the *equal* rights of *all*.

Any attempt, openly or secretly, to advance the claims of one more than another, or to infringe on the equal rights of all, by the power of the State, or by political influence, is treasonable and subversive of the foundations of our liberties. In other words, these different systems are to be left to *work* their way, and exert their influence for good or evil, and prove their weakness or

their strength, their truth or falsity, by their beneficial or pernicious effects, according to the test given by the Divine Author of Christianity, "By their fruits ye shall know them." Thus, also, what is valuable in them all can be clearly eliminated from what is worthless and injurious. That this is a Principle of the Divine Government of the world is clearly seen in all its history. By their fruits or results their claims are to be tested. Thus, also, the highest possible incentive is given to each to develop itself by the utmost activity, and to reform abuses and errors. As to the question of education, which looms up as one of the grand issues of our day, no man in his right senses can deny the obligation of the State, for self-preservation against an ignorance which is fatal to her existence, to take charge of the education of her youth; and it is equally evident that the State has nothing to do with *denominational* education—that is entirely an affair of the respective churches. To expect or demand that public money should be appropriated, by any subterfuge, to such a purpose as this, proves conclusively that those who entertain such views have never comprehended nor imbibed the vital Principles of the American Republic.

Thus we see the same forces are allowed full scope for unlimited development in this country, and purposely so, which have already in the past, and are to-day, inspiring the most bitter and desolating conflicts the world has ever seen. No words can convey adequate impressions of the extreme tortures and agonies for which they are responsible in other lands ; but all these can be traced to the *supremacy of some one* in the State. To guard against this, is vital in our system.

Evidently such a Government as this, in which all the great energies of the human race are left to the fullest possible play and activity consistent with the rights of all, demands an intelligence, a prudence of administration, and, above all, a high moral, public sentiment to control, regulate, and inspire all its positions of authority and influence, such as calls for the highest possible development of manhood in its people.

Whatever strange mistakes, in carrying out its principles in the past, whatever precautions of common intelligence have been neglected, and however impossible it may be now to remedy or correct those mistakes, one duty is plainly before us : to see to it that these great masses of people be pervaded with those Divine Principles and

Truths, which are the salt of the earth, alone able to preserve it from corruption, the only leaven which is capable of pervading the community with elevating and salutary influences.

We have become so accustomed to the enormous influx of population which yearly rolls over our land, that we fail to comprehend the grandeur of the events which are occurring around us, and the rapidity with which momentous issues to the future welfare of our country are pressing for solution. These vast masses of men, out of every nation under heaven, and of every stage of human development, who are filling up this mighty inheritance of ours so rapidly ; these great multitudes, with hardly one element in common but their human nature, to be made capable of self-government, the highest attainment of human nature, to be pervaded with these divine Principles, which alone can insure the success of our government ; how grand a task, how mighty the problem we are called upon to solve.

Let us glance for a moment at the nature of our responsibilities and the true mode of fulfilling them. There are two stages in the moral training and development of men. 1st, That of obedience to law through the appeal to self-interest by

rewards and punishments ; this is typified in the Old Testament system. 2d, A free self-control through the Supreme Governing Power of Love, as in the Gospel. It is in the transition from one to the other that the disorders and perplexities meet us.

To those who have been controlled only by the restraints of law, and, it may be, crushed by a tyranical abuse of power, the transition is extreme to the self-imposed restraints of self-government and obedience to the claims of the law of love, and this is one of the issues we are called upon to face. Hundreds of thousands of men, trained for generations under arbitrary and despotic authority, have been transplanted to our soil and admitted to the free enjoyment of all the rights and privileges, duties and obligations of citizenship without previous preparation. In addition to this, we have, all through the Southern portion of our country, millions of people, suddenly and without preparation, launched into the full enjoyment and responsibility of citizenship. No wonder they fall a prey to demagogues ; no wonder we are passing through scenes of trouble and confusion and perplexity ; that breakers of disorder and demoralization are rolling over us and

threatening the integrity of our institutions. We have been, and are wading through all the evils of this transition period, and an issue is upon us demanding all the resources of an enlightened statesmanship and a Christian Faith, for we have come in contact with evils which threaten the future of our country. We seem to be passing through a crucial test. In this country and in England we find the same grand questions to be met. Is policy or right, mere expediency or stern devotion to truth to be the standard of public and private action? There is but one answer to this question, the answer which human history and the experience of all ages has given, conformity to the Principles of the Divine Government,—this, the decisive and uniform testimony of human experience has declared to be the only solid foundation of the success and stability of any human Government, of the management of human affairs.

Our Principles, if they are sacredly guarded, will insure in the future, as they have in the past, material prosperity and wealth; but wealth can never purchase for us our rights and liberties. How, then, shall we regard this insane sacrifice of all that is sacred and valuable on the altar of gold? We claim to have a perfect human Government,

the result of near six thousand years of human experience—that it alone can secure and preserve the highest and best interests of humanity. If an elasticity which has endured all sorts of abuses and a vitality which has withstood every species of maladministration, constitutes and is a test of right and sound principles in the foundation of Government, then is ours such a Government.

But, magnificent as is our heritage, perfect as is our system, common prudence has been sorely lacking in its conduct. We have placed the most sacred privilege of the citizen in the hands of men utterly incompetent, morally and mentally, for its exercise. Votes are deposited by men unable to read or write, and consequently ignorant of their contents. Money, to purchase votes, decides questions of the utmost importance to the community. Merit and ability are not necessary qualifications for office, and faithful service is not rewarded. Sinecures command enormous salaries, while the masses of toilers who do the work are but poorly clad and fed. The material growth and prosperity of the country are looked upon as spoils to be divided among victorious political partizans. Immense sums are expended on the building and ornamentation of churches, which

the masses of the people never enter, and the grand, purifying and elevating influences of the Christian faith do not reach hundreds of thousands of our race in our own land, to say nothing of the rest of the world. Men are entrusted with power and placed in positions of authority, to use them for the good of the whole community—that power is prostituted—that trust dishonored to a selfish, personal aggrandizement, to a mean self-seeking, which defeats its very object.

The slavery and abject degradation of humanity, inflicted by our present system of polities, by the rule of demagogues, bids fair to be worse than that of king and aristocracy, against which our Fathers rebelled and rose in unconquerable hostility.

The lives, and the best interests of the citizens have been placed at the mercy of a class of men utterly unfitted, morally and intellectually, for so sacred a responsibility, whose only idea of a position of public trust and authority is as a means of legalized robbery and reckless plunder of the public treasury, utterly indifferent to the sufferings and poverty inevitably caused thereby.

The war of the Revolution was precipitated by acts of injustice and cruelty, of despotic power,

which exceeded the limits of endurance of an independent, honorable and high-spirited people, the results of taxation without representation. We are now suffering from public evils, almost as unendurable, from the opposite cause, representation without taxation, or an utterly irresponsible and immoral element, which has been playing into the hands of demagogues. The glory of our system is that the poor and defenseless receive equal justice with the wealthy and influential; how far have we drifted from such an ideal, when (according to a prominent daily journal) 100,000 children, from four years of age upwards, are working ten hours daily in this city and vicinity, and every effort to ameliorate their condition is defeated in our State Legislature by the opposition of two or three manufacturers; when, placing money where it will do the most good, is the kind of influence relied on to secure legislation against the interest, welfare, lives, and, worst of all, *morals* of the people.

It is not necessary to enlarge on evils so well known and so aggravated. The North and South, the East and West, are groaning under this unnatural and impious yoke of bondage—impious because the result of a practical atheism, possible

only to those who exclude the Supreme Governor of the Universe from any participation in human affairs, and, consequently, make no account of His displeasure or interference.

We come, in conclusion, to the remedy and our obligations and responsibilities, as a Society, in applying that remedy. The strength of this Government, and the wonderful elasticity which excites the astonishment even of our own people, is due, I think, to the fact already stated, that it is founded upon the same Principles which regulate the moral Government of God. Errors, willful or even unintentional, ignorance or disregard of truth, are followed by their natural consequences of failure and misery. Repetition of the fault brings increase of suffering, until at last the bitter lesson of experience is learned, and a Prosperity founded on Public Virtue, which alone can be permanent, is secured.

That man, when left to his own native impulses and inherent tendencies, degenerates into a savage, I think the condition of the world to-day fully proves—and the degree and character of his civilization depends upon the *correctness* and the *force* of his *Traditions* of a primitive Revelation.

Wherever the ancient Jewish People (at that

time the sole depositary of the Knowledge and Revelation of the Only True God), were brought in contact with other nations, either by captivity or in the ordinary intercourse of commerce, we find a higher civilization developed.

The noblest elevation and purity of character among the ancient Greeks and Romans is clearly to be attributed to the two grand ideas of that Revelation—the inspiration of the Spirit of God—as expressed in that memorable saying of Seneca, “There is a Holy Spirit in us who watches and observes both good and evil men, and who treats us as we treat him;” and in that equally famous saying of the Roman poet, “*Nihil humani à me alienum puto.*”

This same standard will be found to apply to every nation of Europe from that day to this. Just so far as the religious traditions of the people have deviated from the standard of Divine Truth, and the pure and simple, but sublime doctrines of the Gospel, to that extent has the intellectual, moral, and social status of the people been degraded, and tended back to a barbarous and savage state.

We find, also, in our own limited experience as a nation, the same fact apparent, and we see, in

this universal fact of human history, our danger, the only safeguard of our institutions, and our duty.

The vast importance of this lesson of human history and experience, in view of the problem we have to solve in our day, the transformation of these vast multitudes of ignorant and oppressed people (often of extreme radical opinions), driven from their homes by the evils of bad government, into a united, harmonious, intelligent, self-governing people, is our apology for thus dwelling upon it.

We must fall back, in the face of such a gigantic problem as this, on a higher than human wisdom, on grander principles than those of a mere human policy. Exercising, as did our Fathers in *their* struggle, absolute dependence on Divine Wisdom and Power, realizing that our Government is the last and highest result of Christianity, we must address ourselves, each in his peculiar channel of influence, to the universal diffusion of that Divine remedy for the errors and the selfishness of mankind.

Ours is a nobler than Roman or Grecian civilization—it is Divine. It teaches us not to despise our fellowmen, but to love and pity them in their

ignorance, their bigotry, their degradation, their abject moral humiliation, and to use the appliances which have raised us, and on which we depend, to raise them.

I know of no grander contrast in history than that of those old philosophers, the Stoics and Epicureans (the grandest outgrowth of which heathen civilization was capable) and the ignorant, illiterate fishermen, and the converted Pharisee, whom the Son of God selected to bear His message to men ; and the significance of it is clear, that the wisdom and the power and the glory of human Redemption is of God only. We perceive, then, that these interests are to be advanced not by external force, but solely by moral and spiritual influences, and our aim should be to spread those influences by every means and in every position in which we may be placed.

Thus, only, have we any solid moral lever for elevating, controlling, preserving ourselves and others. To this let all our energies be directed. The work we have to perform in our day is fully as important and as arduous, as that of our Fathers, calling for the same devotion of life and property, the same sacrifice of ease and comfort. The revolution which is going on in this country

and in England, the crisis through which we are passing, is as tremendous in its present effects and future consequences, as that in which our Fathers were actors ; and we, if we would represent them, cannot sit idly as mere spectators, we must engage in the conflict intelligently and resolutely.

This country and its Institutions never were intended to serve the low purposes of personal aggrandizement. Nor can they be prostituted to such uses without the sacrifice of “ those exalted rights and liberties of humanity, without which the rank of a rational being is a curse instead of a blessing.”

There has been a criminal neglect hitherto in the conservative element of the country. Honest and *honorable* men, not in name but in reality, must descend into the arena, great as may be their repugnance. Only by sacrificing selfish ease, and holding in abeyance refined and cultivated tastes, and entering, as our Fathers did, into the valley of humiliation and self-sacrifice, can this great country be wrested from the hands of self-seeking men. Men of honor, and of integrity, must take their places, as some noble men have done in our State Legislature, from purely patriotic motives, among those who are dragging the honor and fair

fame of our beloved land in the mire and filth, and fight this battle to the bitter end.

Let us not deem this impracticable, that mere politicians, with their crooked ways, will triumph,—not if God rules and we put our trust in Him. A practical Atheism is at the bottom of all these disorders. A moral governor of this world must first be banished from all interference in its affairs, before men can barter positions of public trust for money, and Atheism, like all other errors, is weak and can only exist by preying upon a prosperity created by truth and faith. We are called upon by our Institution to remember, that, by the *Grace of God* we are free and independent; “that it pleased the Supreme Governor of the Universe, in the disposition of human affairs to cause the separation of the colonies of North America from the domination of Great Britain,” and to find our inspiration and our success from the same infallible source.

“An unalterable determination to promote and cherish between the respective States, that union and national honor so essentially necessary to their happiness and the future dignity of the American Empire,” is the remaining principle on which is founded our obligations and our union.

A duty is here prescribed for us, which was so ably and forcibly insisted on by the orator of our last anniversary, that we are to go out of the narrow boundaries of our State lines in our affections and in our duties; that devotion to the interests of our whole country, and not of any section, alone constitutes us, in any true sense, American citizens. I will add, therefore, but one thought on this sacred obligation.

Recent events would make silence on this point a crime. What kind of union can that be, which is not founded on affection and unselfish regard for the interests and well-being of all our people, North and South, East and West? Not to suffer in ourselves the evils which afflict any of the members of this great body, indicates the insensibility of approaching dissolution, and not the absence of vital danger.

What a spectacle meets us to-day, as we look out on our country, in the light of this obligation. A letter recently received from the secretary of the South Carolina Society, represents, in the saddest colors, the gloomy condition of that State; and the daily journals, of all political tendencies, present to us such scenes of anarchy and social disorganization in the southern por-

tions of our country, that indifference to them is criminal in the highest degree. Can we conscientiously say that we have fully realized those obligations of brotherly affection which we have assumed ? It seems as if a prophetic inspiration had foreshadowed to our Fathers these sad experiences of our day, and had induced them to institute this Society, and to incorporate this very Principle of union and national honor between the respective States, as one of its vital Principles, to keep alive that spirit of brotherly affection and perpetual friendship which bound *them* together as *one man*. These desperate evils are the natural and necessary fruits of this *political prostitution* of which we have spoken ; *this* is the *giant evil*, the prolific source of every moral disorder and deformity in our States and in our communities, the sure precursor of the death of liberty. Against this, which vitiates and nullifies every benevolent purpose and wise provision of our government, our united efforts are to be concentrated.

Our Fathers have so constituted this Society, and Divine Providence has so arranged the development of this country, that we are enabled to exert a wider and more powerful influence

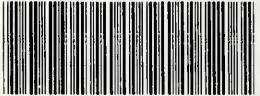
in our land than any body of men of equal numbers. The President of the United States is one of our honorary members. Our President occupies one of the highest positions of extensive influence in the world, and has achieved lasting honor for himself, and proved that the Principles of this Society exert a living power in its members, by establishing arbitration for war, in the settlement of national misunderstandings, between two of the greatest powers on earth. The highest municipal officer in a neighboring city is also Vice-President of the Society of his native State, and, by his noble and manly address lately issued, has demonstrated that the spirit of our Forefathers is living and vital among us, and in active efficiency in political affairs, even in this hour of their deepest degradation. Our members are scattered, not only over the country, but over the world ; some of the highest rank in the army and navy, and many others occupying positions of high, social, and public influence ; and all of them able to produce, if united in this matter, an influence which cannot be measured. For be it remembered, that the grandest results in history have not been produced by force of numbers, but, on the contrary,

by the few, united and inspired by a Divine Principle, and that with the truth and the power of God on our side, "one may chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight." Our strength and success will depend, not on superior numbers, but on the extent of our faith in our Principles, and in Him on Whom our Fathers relied, and to Whom they publicly ascribed the glory.

Let us address ourselves, then, by a closer union and co-operation with all the other State Societies, to the fulfillment of this great mission. May it not be in the design of Providence to open the way for this in the approaching Centennial?



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